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A Nation Struggling to Identify Itself

Cote d'Ivoire as a Neopatrimonial State

by

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Introduction

As Africa moved out from the shadows of colonial rule, the continent suffered from numerous conflicts to varying degrees as it struggled to define and govern itself. Over the years many theories and models have emerged to analyze the different reasons for the types of conflicts occurring. One of these frameworks is that of a neopatrimonial system of governance. In and of itself neopatrimonial governance does not cause conflict but as it starts to breakdown and deteriorate, as these systems are prone to do because of their high degree of marginalization, then the likelihood of conflict increases. This is pointed out by Paul Williams when he states, “The risks were especially acute when neopatrimonial systems experienced a crisis which the ruling authorities were unable to contain. Such crises tended to occur when external resources (financial or political) dried up, when outrageous behavior tested the limits of the system’s legitimacy, or when other factors developed that made armed rebellion feasible for marginalized segments of the population.”¹ This paper will show how the conflict in Cote d’Ivoire ignited in 2002 as a result of the breakdown of the neopatrimonial state. In order to analyze this case study, this paper will look at the key factors mentioned by Williams. This will include an examination of the decline in governance, economic issues that further exacerbated the problem, followed by a section on inclusion versus exclusion of the population. This will lay the framework to show how it all combines to form grievances within a marginalized segment of the population who were awaiting their opportunity for armed rebellion, an opportunity that came in 2002 resulting in eight years of conflict. The final section will look at the unresolved issues that remain unanswered today and the risk of reversion back into conflict if those issues are not addressed. Before it is possible to examine the decline in governance that represents the fall of the neopatrimonial state it is important to first give brief description of key components of a

neopatrimonial state followed by a short historical background of Cote d'Ivoire in order to set the stage.

Neopatrimonialism

Neopatrimonialism finds its roots from two parts: "neo" or modern and then the patrimonial system of rule. The traditional form of patrimonial rule is attributed to Max Weber which is a subtype of traditional authority or domination. Under a patrimonial system all ruling relationships both political and administrative are based on personal relationships.² This system tends to be a trickle-down or rewards based system where in exchange for loyalty and patronage support is provided from the leader. That support takes forms such as wealth, power and security. This sets up a patron client relationship, where the patron controls the goods and the clients receive those goods in exchange for their support. The modern form is one that involves using resources of the state and political governance as means toward personal gain. Under this modern form known to as neopatrimonialism, the ruler's personal interests will tend to be the key in decision making as it is rare that any bureaucratic procedure would be allowed to stand in the way of senior political elites' wishes.³ This system then tends to be one based on fractionalization where patrons and supporters are allowed to thrive, while simultaneously weakening political opponents.⁴ It is this fractionalization and the concept of those included versus excluded from having not only a say but the ability to reap the political benefits from this particular style of government that becomes the central point of controversy and often sparks conflict.

Historical Background

Upon receiving its independence from France in 1960 after 67 years of colonial rule, Cote d'Ivoire immediately began to prosper and was considered a model for African nations and more specifically Western African countries to follow. The first twenty years of independence was a time of such economic development, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth exceeded 11 percent in the 1960's and 7 percent in the 1970's that this timeframe is often referred to as the "Ivorian Miracle."⁵ This stability and prosperity was in large part due to the leadership of Felix Houphouet-Boigny, and the one-party system that existed in the country. It was under this one-party system and Houphouet-Boigny's leadership that Cote d'Ivoire also saw the rise of the neopatrimonial system of governance.

One of the key resources that lead to not only Cote d'Ivoire's but also Houphouet-Boigny's prosperity was cocoa. Cote d'Ivoire was the world's largest producer of cocoa accounting for just over 40% of the world's total.⁶ From this large profitable cash crop, Houphouet-Boigny was able to secure the funds to ensure the survival of his neopatrimonial regime and the loyal patronage of much of the populace. Up until the 1980's, peasant farmers received only about 25 percent of the world market price, with another 10 to 12 percent going to intermediaries, and the remaining 65 percent going directly to the government.⁷ Some of these funds went into a filiere, or coffee-cocoa stabilization fund controlled by the government that was meant to ensure stable prices even to producers even if the world price dropped; again this was another means to ensure loyalty amongst the citizens.⁸ Out of the growth from Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa and coffee production, two key variables became central factors to the conflict that later ensued. The first of these variables lies in the area of labor and immigration.

Both cocoa and coffee are labor intensive crops. Therefore in order to produce a larger crop and cultivate a greater area of the land, Houphouet-Boigny introduced a policy of *mise en valeur* in which the government would grant land to anyone who would put it to use.⁹ This policy encouraged mass immigration from poorer neighboring countries, such as Mali, Guinea and most notably, Burkina Faso. Ultimately these immigrants seeking a better life would come to comprise just over one third of the country's population.¹⁰ This massive immigration during this period also consolidated Houphouet-Boigny's stranglehold on power because by not only giving them ownership of land he also granted them the right to vote and other citizenship rights.¹¹ The reason Houphouet-Boigny was able to do so was because he recognized by improving their quality of life compared to that of their native country and granting them land ownership, he was all but certain to have their vote.

A second key variable rising from Houphouet-Boigny's term as ruler and benefits from the countries' cocoa trade were the close ties he maintained with the former colonial power of France. Houphouet-Boigny fully recognized the power France exerted both within Europe and on the world stage, so he knew close ties with France would provide not only better prospects for prosperity but also the possibility of greater power for himself. It was Felix Houphouet-Boigny who allegedly coined the pun, "France a fric", to identify the fact that France was flush with cash.¹² Houphouet-Boigny used this to his advantage to secure better prices for Ivorian cocoa as well as use the close ties with France to help provide for some of the country's national security. Still to this day France maintains a military base in the Cote d'Ivoire. At its peak, the Ivorian economy was thought to be a major source of funds to many of the large political parties in France.¹³

The 1980's and 1990's saw a decline in the price of cocoa, something that will be discussed later. This recession combined with other growing pressures caused the government to adopt a multiparty system in 1990 prior to elections. However Houphouet-Boigny managed to maintain support throughout the country and was re-elected in a landslide. This victory though was short lived as Felix Houphouet-Boigny passed away in 1993 after 33 years of stable rule for the country. In the wake of his death with no clearly delineated successor, a power struggle began to emerge that led to degrading neopatrimonial governance over the next ten years.

Governance

In the ensuing power vacuum that occurred, National Assembly Leader Henri Konan Bedie eventually took power. This rise to power though only came after a struggle with the Prime Minister Alassane Outtara who eventually resigned his post in protest of the succession.¹⁴ It was in this power struggle that many fledgling issues began to surface and steps would later move them into a position of greater prominence. One issue of this era was the fact Bedie came from the south and was ethnically Ivorian whereas Outtara was from the north with family ties to Burkina Faso and the immigration movement started under Houphouet-Boigny's policies. In this power struggle, the voting block was split with the southern Ivorian block supporting Bedie and the northern immigrant block voting for Outtara; this led to the decision by the new president that instead of trying to win the votes in the north a move had to be made to nullify those votes.¹⁵

This policy came to fruition in the 1995 elections under the "ivorite" concept.¹⁶ This concept propagated an ultra-nationalist sentiment that was embraced and responded to by many of the Ivorian elites who had a great deal of influence with the voting populace.¹⁷ Under this concept in order to run for presidency the candidate had to prove that both parents were native born and ethnically Ivorian. This policy specifically targeted the elimination of Outtara from the

race but also sent many other would be opponents scrambling for proof of citizenship or boycotting the election altogether due to the controversy over this policy. During this election Bedie also harnessed the power of other branches of his government in an attempt to secure more victories for his party, the Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI). These tactics included jailing of popular leaders of Rassemblement des Republicains (RDR) for public disturbance, effectively removing them from the race after long judicial trials within his appointed court system.¹⁸ The RDR was the party founded by Outarra and was made up predominately of northern immigrants. As ethnic troubles broke out in the southwest, Bedie's government responded by expelling 20,000 Burkinabe immigrants, some of whom had been in Cote d'Ivoire for upwards of 20 years.¹⁹ These measures eliminated their potential votes and reduced not only voters likely to be against the PDCI but also the number of candidates and opposition for many posts.

Bedie was successful in his reelection campaign in 1995 due in no small part to the policies and practices mentioned above. Now at the start of new five year term, Bedie desired to cement many of these policies into law to secure his stranglehold on power. The National Assembly took advantage of the two major opposition parties boycotting in June of 1998 to pass through major legislation and new amendments to the constitution that would further the ethnic divide.²⁰ One piece of legislation that will be discussed in greater detail in the economics section was the 1998 Rural Land Law, restricting land ownership to Ivorian citizens.²¹ The constitutional amendments all sought to greatly increase the power of the president.²² In December 1999 a change ended Henri Bedie's tenure as president and brought into question the future of many of the policies that had been implemented during that Bedie's presidency. This change took the form of a military coup d'etat.

The military was upset over non-payment of salaries and failure of the Bedie regime to keep other promises. They banded together to launch a successful bloodless coup and named General Robert Guei the new leader.²³ General Robert Guei had been an army chief under Bedie, but after post-election violence broke out in 1995 when Guei refused to use the army to crush the civilians, he was fired.²⁴ Upon taking office, Guei promised to clean up the Ivorian political scene and then return to the military.²⁵ However it did not take him long to change his mind and he began to take steps to try and secure his continuance in power. The most notable step was the continuation and legalization of one of Bedie's most controversial policies, the "Ivorite" concept, which occurred through the addition of Article 35 to the constitution. Under this new amendment, candidates for public office had to be Ivorian by birth from both parents of direct Ivorian descent, had to have lived in Cote d'Ivoire continuously for five years preceding the election, ten years in total, and must have never claimed another nationality.²⁶ To take things one step further leading up to the 2000 elections, a Supreme Court appointed by Guei, ruled that neither Outtara nor Bedie was eligible to run for office.²⁷ This left Guei with only one competitor, Laurent Gbagbo. When it became evident that Gbagbo was winning the election with record low voter turnout, Guei halted the elections and declared himself the winner. Protests immediately erupted forcing Guei to flee to nearby Benin while Gbagbo seized the opportunity to declare himself president.²⁸

Laurent Gbagbo had been on the political scene for a while as the founder of the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) and was the first person to contest the leadership of Felix Houphouet-Boigny running against him in the 1990 elections. In the 1995 elections, Gbagbo's FPI party was one of many that boycotted the elections in protest of PDCI policies. However by the time of the 2000 elections when most of the stronger opposition candidates were declared ineligible to

run, as was the case for Outtara and Bedie, Gbabgo had his chance to finally rise to power. After declaring himself president and forcing Guei to flee, Gbabgo did little to try and reverse the path of poor governance that had troubled the country for almost a decade. If anything his policies and leadership would continue to make the situation worse. Gbabgo invoked the same “Ivorite” clauses to prevent Outtara from running in the December 2000 legislative elections,²⁹ a move that provoked another round of election violence, escalating into another attempted coup in January 2001 that was blamed on foreigners, especially Burkinabes.³⁰ This coup and the propaganda that followed added hate to an already growing divide between autochthons and immigrants. In 2002 Gbabgo instituted one final policy to further the ethnic divide by creating a new identification process based on ideology and autochthony.³¹ This policy was administered under the new Office National d’Identification, and required individuals to prove their nationality by members of their home village vouching for them would then have to be validated by local commissions composed of local dignitaries and political party leaders loyal to Gbabgo.³² This policy gave Gbabgo and his supporters’ great power to decide who was truly Ivorian and eliminate potential threats by not issuing the appropriate identification card. This policy constituted the last in a long line of policies that created a divide between the immigrants who once were so welcomed and the hatred now directed at them from ethnic Ivorians.

This section has shown the steady and fairly rapid degradation that occurred in Cote d’Ivoire’s governance as a result of the breakdown in the neopatrimonial system set up at the outset of their independence in 1960. While Felix Houphouet-Boigny was far from perfect and definitely established a neopatrimonial system that made him and his clients extremely wealthy, he was able to rule peacefully for 33 years until his death in 1993. However in just one-fifth of that time, Cote d’Ivoire had a series of three leaders and saw contentious elections and violence

increase each time. During this timeframe many policies were implemented to eliminate potential competitors but also incited an ethnic hatred and divide within the country. While the decline in governance is no doubt the key lynchpin leading to the ensuing conflict, many economic factors came into play that exacerbated these leaders' causes.

Economic Issues

Cote d'Ivoire hit its peak GDP in 1978 while the country as a whole experienced a negative 1.9 percent growth for the period from 1975 to 2003.³³ As discussed earlier, Cote d'Ivoire was the world's leading producer of cocoa and the filiere produced under Houphouet-Boigny's rule was filled from revenue earned from this and other cash crops such as coffee. This system tied the welfare of the Ivorian people directly to this crop and therefore the country was particularly sensitive to price fluctuations. A fact that spelled doom for the country when cocoa prices dropped from almost \$4,000 per ton in the late 1970's to just under \$2,000 per ton in the early 1980's followed by a precipitous decline throughout the 1980's and early 1990's.³⁴ This fall in price coincided with the ending of Houphouet-Boigny's rule, so by the time of his death in 1993 the once prosperous country found itself in full-fledged recession; the filiere was all but defunct and cocoa prices had bottomed out around \$1,000 per ton. This situation was further exacerbated in the 1990's when members of the European Union, International Monetary Fund and World Bank froze loan disbursements due to lack of transparency in Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa trade and the perceived corruption within the Ivorian government.³⁵

An additional aspect of the economy that suffered greatly during this timeframe of declining governance concerned the issue of land ownership to determine who had the rights to the profits from crop production. The Rural Land Reform Act of 1998, made it illegal for foreigners to own land and was the main source of legitimate entitlement to ownership solely

based on autochthony.³⁶ This reform went a long way to further the “ivorite” concept as indigenous southerners were encouraged to take away southern land long held, worked and harvested by immigrant northerners.³⁷ This new policy when coupled with the economic downturn in the urban environments, that saw the significant return of many urban youth to their home villages, led to a demand for land at an all-time high³⁸ This return often created heated tensions with families as the returning youth found family lands ceded away to foreigners but also quickly became a flashpoint for legally backed violence towards non-indigenous land owners.

With widespread recession and a fairly large African youth bulge, where 38 percent of the population in 2000 was between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, many of these youth began to turn to militia and paramilitary organizations as a means to earn a living.³⁹ The rise of youth based paramilitary organizations came about for three primary reasons: distrust in the military, economic benefit, and these organizations granted the government a level of perceived deniability. Guei’s rise to power and successful coup helped to seal a distrust of a strong military force in Cote d’Ivoire for future leaders. This trend is common among distrustful African rulers who purposefully keep their armed forces weak and divided for fear of a coup.⁴⁰ This is a tact Gbabgo adopted in his regime as he attempted to maintain his hold on power. However, there are still other security issues that need to be addressed and political rivals to be dealt with, so enter the militant organizations. These youth paramilitaries were able to find strong footing as the government would often provide taskings while ensuring more than adequate compensation for successful completion.⁴¹ Another benefit these organizations provided to Gbabgo and his supporters was a level of deniability. By not having government soldiers conduct operations, Gbabgo could plead lack of knowledge or involvement in many of the attacks and crimes these

organizations committed. The final reason that contributed to these organizations seeing such rapid expansion during this timeframe was the economic benefit and potential they offered to the numerous unemployed youth. Besides government kickbacks and incentives, these organizations were able to generate substantial income through various activities. One such means was in the way of roadblocks that these different groups would set up along key roadways and intersections. While not only a required part of security during conflict these checkpoints represented a lucrative business model, as paramilitary organizations charged fees for passage. Roadblocks and checkpoints utilized shakedown techniques and fees were required for passage through. For example a man traveling with all proper identification requirements would be able to secure passage for 1,000 CFA francs or the equivalent of \$2, yet someone without all the proper identification would often find themselves forced to pay upwards of ten times that amount.⁴² Other individuals hurt by these types of efforts were the cocoa farmers as they were forced to pay either security or bribes transport their crop to port, a cost that can run upwards of \$2,000.⁴³ The growing popularity of these militia organizations not only served to create a large percentage of armed youth but also a militant and lawless culture.

Economically what had once seemed like such a bright future with the great prosperity of the 1970's, saw steady decline through the 1980's and into full blown recession in the 1990's into 2000. The steady decline in cocoa prices greatly impacted the Ivorian economy so heavily dependent upon the revenues the crop produced. When this price decline was amplified by pressure from the international community as well as poor internal governance producing legislation such as the Land Reform Act, tensions continued to escalate. All of these combined to see the rise of armed paramilitary organizations and only served to push the country closer to the brink of conflict as well as further damage the legitimate economy of the country. Prior to

looking at the conflict that arose out this it is important to first clearly break down the concept of inclusion versus exclusion as it applies to Cote d'Ivoire.

Inclusion vs. Exclusion

It has been argued that a central evil of neopatrimonial rule is the strong tendency towards fractionalization between those who enjoy the benefits of society and those who are left on the outside looking in.⁴⁴ Given neopatrimonialism's susceptibility to division within societies it becomes increasingly important to examine the division in this conflict in political, economic and social terms.⁴⁵ In terms of Cote d'Ivoire the inclusion/exclusion line runs predominately between the southern and northern regions of the country, as these geographic divide also accounted for divides in ethnicity, religion and economic status.

In the southern half of the country is where the majority of the regime's power and benefits accrue to the local population. The south has long viewed itself as ethnically Ivorian and is made up of mostly Christians as well as traditional religions. The south has also long viewed itself as producing the ruling elites of the country, specifically the first two presidents, Felix Houphouet-Boigny and Henri Konan Bedie.⁴⁶ Additionally the southern areas of the country are most suitable for production of cocoa and coffee; thus contained within this region are the concentration of the large plantations. Finally the majority of commercial development occurs in this region along with the country's two most prominent cities, the capital Yamoussoukro and Abidjan. Abidjan is a key port city for not only Cote d'Ivoire but much of West Africa, making its control vital in order to exert security and regional influence.⁴⁷

In contrast to this the northern region is composed of predominately immigrants, many with close ties to their home countries among the bordering nations, of Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso. Additionally the indigenous groups in the northern area have always been more closely

tied to these neighboring countries with long histories of trade between them.⁴⁸ These close ties to the bordering states the main cause why many southerners to lump all northerners together as immigrants or not truly Ivorian. The northern region of the country also contains most of the Cote d'Ivoire's Muslim population, a religion that accounts for 40% overall.⁴⁹ The central hub for the north lies in the second largest city of Bouake. However the land in this region is not suitable for the production of cocoa or coffee and therefore many of the people living here migrate to the south to work on the plantations. Another round of migration from the north occurred as Cote d'Ivoire became more urbanized when much of the development went into the cities in the south. While the common view during prosperity was one of a societal melting pot this turned out to be more like cohabitation where each group filled a specific economic niche in society, a fact that was highlighted during the economic recession.⁵⁰

So when looking at the neopatrimonial division that occurred it is clear to see the strong inclusion of the south while northerners are excluded. This can be seen from not only the southerners' stranglehold on filling key political positions of the country but also the preponderance of wealth the system uses to fuel the trickled down patronage under neopatrimonialism. Finally the southern area of the country holds the political, economic and social centers of power in Yamoussoukro and Abidjan. These three factors combined to drive the belief that was perpetuated during this time; that ethnic Ivorians of the south are superior to immigrants of the north. When this belief is coupled with the fact many northerners and immigrants moved into the southern region to work on the plantations but some ended up owning them under Houphouet-Boigny's liberal land policy, it was a recipe for disaster. Emerging from this concept of inclusion versus exclusion the next link to examine is the grievances that arise and the opportunity to act upon those grievances.

Grievances & Opportunity

Williams argues that a neopatrimonial system increases the likelihood of armed conflict when at the brink of crisis a segment of the population finds itself both marginalized and organized.⁵¹ Rebel groups often feed off this marginalization and use it to then radicalize disaffected groups; formulating grievances against the government while gaining support for their cause. Through this process an organized resistance of militia groups often form and in the case of Cote d'Ivoire one such group became the Mouvement Patriotique de la Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI). The MPCI was composed of former students and many cashiered soldiers under the Gbagbo regime living in exile in Burkina Faso.⁵² The group's leader was a former radical student named Guillaume Soro.

Soro and the MPCI pushed a cause that resonated with the northern immigrants: simply they were sick of being mistreated by the government. It was obvious that they were excluded from the political benefits from the neopatrimonial system. Policies such as the Article 35 of the Constitution and the Land Reform Act restricted northerners' rights. Additionally implementation of those and similar policies indicated a breakdown in the rule of law. However Soro summed up their grievances best when asked about his group's identity, "If you are from the north you are subhuman, according to the government. We want a united Ivory Coast. We want a country that lives in harmony and includes everyone."⁵³ Now that a resistance movement was organized, it needed only to find the opportunity to readdress their grievances.

The MPCI created their own opportunity on 19 September 2002 when they simultaneously launched a rebellion and coup d'etat.⁵⁴ Unlike many insurgencies that start from neighboring countries and along the border, violence erupted in Abidjan, and while this coup was unsuccessful it tied up enough of the government security forces to allow the rebellion to take

hold in the north and capture the key cities of Bouake and Korhogo.⁵⁵ These actions quickly provided the rebel movement territory and momentum. As a result the country was basically divided into two parts: the northern section controlled by the MPCJ and supporters of Ouattara's RDR party as opposed to the southern section of ethnic Ivoirians controlled by the government and supporters of Gbagbo's regime. This division would remain relatively intact until the elections of 2010 that finally saw the northerner Ouattara come to power after being excluded from many previous elections. The final section of this paper will briefly discuss some of the unresolved issues President Ouattara must deal with in the future.

Unresolved Issues

As the Cote d'Ivoire attempts to move beyond a period of conflict that has lasted almost a decade there remain many unresolved issues that either contributed to the conflict or resulted from the conflict that should now be addressed. The first of these and perhaps most important is the lack of stable governance over the last ten years. As regimes changed, the quality and capacity of governance continued to deteriorate incrementally. For the last eight years since the Linas Marcoussis Accords, the government in Cote d'Ivoire has functioned under a national reconciliation agreement, yet by most accounts the south was administered by Gbagbo and the north by Ouattara as both sides proved unwilling to demobilize or comply with deadlines.⁵⁶ This political gridlock leads to a second priority issue of the paramilitary culture.

Both sides relied heavily on armed militias and many youth paramilitary organizations during the conduct of the war. Besides receiving pay for fighting, these organizations have also found lucrative employment through roadblocks and shakedowns. Having grown up in a militarized culture like that and for many that is all they have ever known, there must be effective measures implemented to disarm these groups, restore security and find suitable

employment elsewhere for these folks. This leads to another area of concern to be addressed which relates to economic issues.

While Bedie was able to return GDP growth to a rate of 7 percent from 1994 to 1998, that was the last time Cote d'Ivoire had viable growth levels.⁵⁷ The African Development Bank has estimated the cost of doing business increased by at least 10 percent during the conflict.⁵⁸ In addition security concerns exist along the trade routes into Abidjan and the port. Production of cocoa has dropped due to the war torn economy. Land that used to produce 8 tons of cocoa now struggles to produce 2.5 tons due to lack of labor, environmental sustainability and the inability to get much needed items such as fertilizer.⁵⁹ Farmers also receive less than market value for their crops due to corruption and required bribes. In 2005 it was estimated Ivorian farmers were forced to sell their cocoa at about one third less than official market price.⁶⁰

Another area of concern is the underlying ethnic hatred and the whole concept of "Ivorite," which was one of the key factors contributing to the conflict. While the laws that were passed dealing with this concept that prevented Outtara from running have been revoked, there is still simmering ethnic tension among the people. Just because the law is revoked does not mean that the hatred disappears overnight, southerners still feel they are superior and legislation or perceived decreases in standards they have grown accustomed to will inevitably cause grievances on their side. While the northerners have gained greater voice in governance, there still remain issues related to the terms of land ownership as well ensuring that northern immigrants do not seek revenge.

This extended period of conflict also has greatly strained Cote d'Ivoire's relationship with many of its neighbors. Liberia and Burkina Faso have both been blamed for supporting and equipping the rebel militias. Additionally it looks as though fighters may have come from those

countries, especially from Liberia when Charles Taylor supporters sought refuge. Another strategic relationship that became increasingly strained was with France; which had been Cote d'Ivoire's most powerful world ally. During this conflict France intervened many times and tried to assist in the peace process and in doing so anyone with French affiliation became a target, especially French military members. In 2004 the French military base was bombed killing nine soldiers.⁶¹ Finally there is distrust by many of the United Nations. Gbabgo protested the fairness of the 2010 election to the Ivorian Constitutional Council (ICC), which is the only body constitutionally, empowered to declare a winner.⁶² The ICC agreed with many of Gbabgo claims and annulled some of the votes in the districts in question and finally declared him the winner.⁶³ However an independent election commission (IEC), a required oversight by the Ouagadougou Agreement, did not accept irregularities and declared Outtara the winner.⁶⁴ The special representative of the secretary general and the UN envoy sent to oversee the election also declared Outtara the winner but on fewer votes than the IEC.⁶⁵ Given that three different organizations released different results, allowed Cote d'Ivoire's political parties to marginalize the legitimacy of the elections. As a result this has caused some to question the neutrality of the UN and see it more as just a puppet of France, who sided with Outtara.⁶⁶

Finally in a conflict driven by ethnic hatred, this war saw its share of atrocities. The International Criminal Court has launched an investigation and indicted Gbabgo for crimes against humanity, who is now waiting trial. President Outtara and many of the other remaining elites have allegations against them that are being investigated by the International Criminal Court. All of these unresolved issues combine to constrain the new government at a less than desirable starting point. Much action and significant efforts must be taken by the Outtara regime to get Cote d'Ivoire united as a nation under one leader, generating revenue and diffusing ethnic

tension. However, if these steps are not taken, or are misperceived by one side or another, the likelihood of conflict recurring in Cote d'Ivoire is considerable.

Conclusion

This paper examined the risks of conflict as a result of a failure of a neopatrimonial system of governance. Paul Williams shows that while deterioration of neopatrimonial government in and of itself does not cause conflict but when coupled with certain factors the risk is heightened when he states, "The risks were especially acute when neopatrimonial systems experienced a crisis which the ruling authorities were unable to contain. Such crises tended to occur when external resources (financial or political) dried up, when outrageous behavior tested the limits of the system's legitimacy, or when other factors developed that made armed rebellion feasible for marginalized segments of the population."⁶⁷ In analyzing Cote d'Ivoire it is possible to see all of these factors were present. External resources began to dry up when the price of cocoa dropped in the 1980's and 1990's causing recession throughout the country. Outrageous behavior emerged that pushed the regime's legitimacy as rulers constructed ways to keep opponents out of elections. Laws such as the Land Reform Act and Article 35 of the Constitution, which legalized the "Ivorite" concept pushed the country into an ethnically driven divide. Then by looking at the exclusion of the immigrants and northerners in the political system as well as the economic rewards it produced it became clear that a large segment of the population had been marginalized and had legitimate grievances. Coupled with a weakening of the army by the Gbagbo regime after the successful coup in 1999, the factors were all in place not only for the possibility of armed rebellion but also the spark that ignited it in 2002. Now after almost a decade of conflict Cote d'Ivoire still has many unresolved issues to deal with if it is going to break this cycle of conflict and violence that have emerged from the failure of its

neopatrimonial governance. The lack of stable government and the war have further weakened the economy. The war along with preceding decades of recession saw the rise of paramilitary groups and a largely youth based militia culture. This culture has now become ingrained into Ivorian society and will be difficult to break. Additionally while the actual “Ivorite” laws have been rescinded, the country must still find a way to resolve many issues that remain in effect while dissipating ethnic hatred incited by the laws. To make matters worse relationships with many of its neighbors have deteriorated badly during this conflict, not to mention its relationship with France and the UN. Finally when all sides of the conflict as well as many remaining key leaders of the country have allegedly engaged in war crimes and crimes against humanity, Cote d’Ivoire faces an uphill battle to redefine its identity. Outtara must find a way to address these issues, providing stable and better governance, improving greater economic opportunities and enhancing the security of his people and nation to move Cote d’Ivoire back onto the path of prosperity it once enjoyed.

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- ¹ Williams, *War & Conflict*, 55.
- ² Erdmann, *Neo-Patrimonial Rule*.
- ³ Williams, *War & Conflict*, 57.
- ⁴ Ibid, 56.
- ⁵ Kireyev and Le Hen, *Cote d'Ivoire Takes Big step Toward Economic Recovery*.
- ⁶ McGovern, *Making War*, 137.
- ⁷ Ibid, 138.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid, 80.
- ¹⁰ Boas and Dunn, *African Guerrillas*, 85.
- ¹¹ McGovern, *Making War*, 81.
- ¹² Ibid, 150.
- ¹³ Ibid, 150.
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- ⁵⁰ Boas and Dunn, *African Guerrillas*, 85.
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⁶³ Ibid.
⁶⁴ Sane, *Cote d'Ivoire: Election-Chronicle of a Failure Foretold*, 1.
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